

The President's Daily Brief

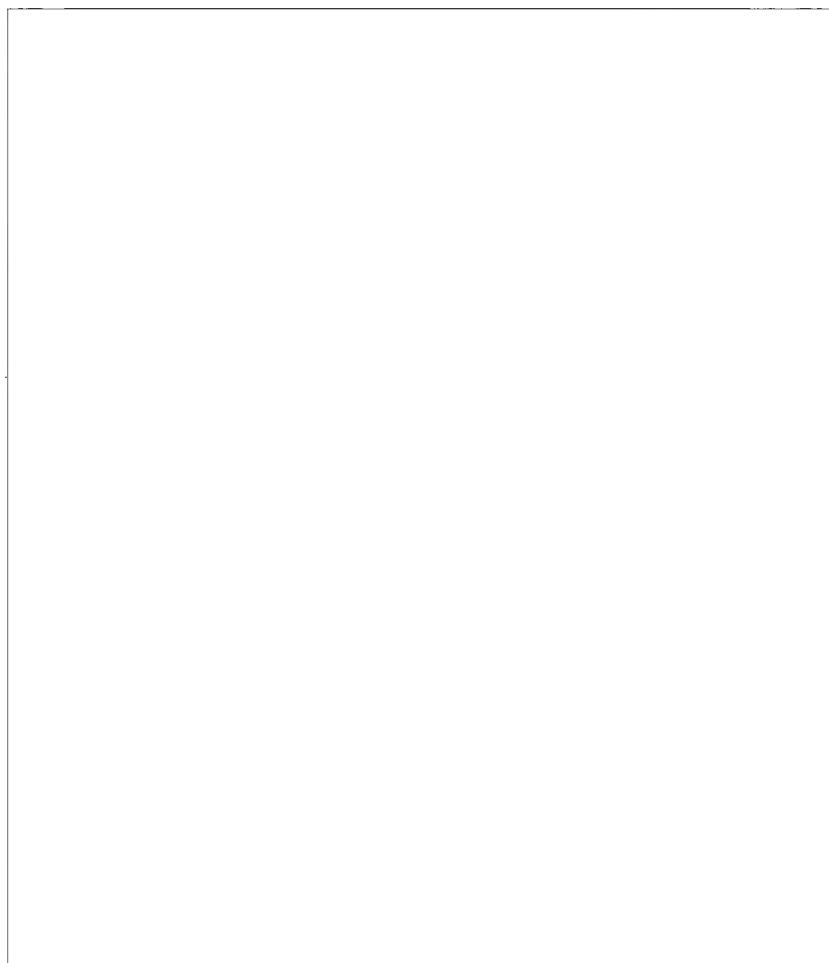
~~Top Secret~~ 18 September 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
18 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Israel



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2. Middle East

The Suez Canal area has been comparatively quiet, but sporadic shooting continues along the Israel-Jordan border. The Israelis used Soviet artillery captured from the Arabs to shell a Jordanian town yesterday. They openly declared this was retaliation for Jordanian shelling.

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3. Philippines-
Malaysia

Marcos is looking for a way to sign the bill referring to Philippine sovereignty over Sabah without provoking an open break with Malaysia. He is thinking about a presidential letter interpreting the bill as merely a restatement of claim, not an expression of intent to assert sovereignty now. Malaysia may not swallow this.

4. Berlin

Access to East Berlin has been made less convenient for West Germans and West Berliners. In their latest demonstration of sovereignty, the East Germans have closed all but one crossing point to Germans from the West. Allied access to East Berlin is not affected.

5. Poland

Dissension in the leadership over Czechoslovakia undoubtedly continues. The acting foreign minister hinted [redacted] last week that the invasion was a mistake. For the record, however, regime spokesmen all echo the standard line.

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6. Ecuador

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7. Portugal

Salazar is still alive and, in fact, has shown some improvement. It remains unlikely, however, that the 79-year-old prime minister will ever recover fully.

8. Soviet Union

Zond-5 has rounded the moon and is heading back toward earth. The return trip requires extreme precision. If it is successful, the circumlunar mission will be recovered Saturday.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes

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18 September 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

18 September 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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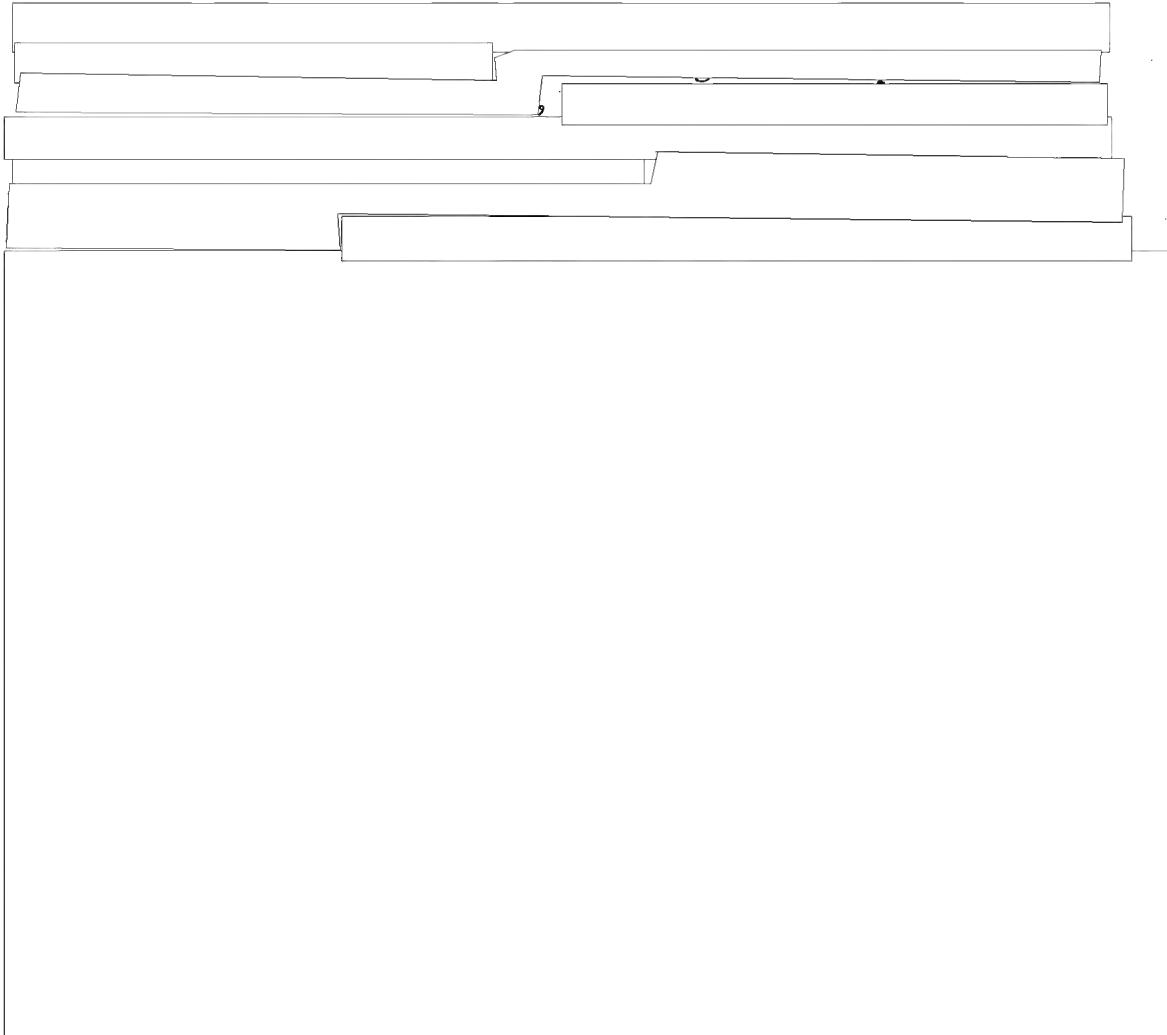
Postwar Planning: Hanoi's reconstruction efforts have been confined primarily to repairing bomb damage, but the North Vietnamese continue to discuss postwar planning in trade talks with Western businessmen.

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East Europeans Critical of North Vietnamese:
Hanoi's search for Free World trade and aid contacts may be in part a hedge against the possibility that

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Reservists' Protests: A Hanoi news agency transmission in English on 16 September briefly notes that 113 US Army reservists recently refused to go to South Vietnam because the war is "illegal and unconstitutional."

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Hanoi on US Policy: The daily flow of propaganda from Hanoi contains the same basic message: the US should recognize its "failure" in Vietnam and acknowledge it by stopping the bombing and negotiating a solution. An article in the party daily on 14 September

described American policymakers as ostriches who should "withdraw their heads from the sand and get moving." It claims that the American people have "begun to realize the truth" about Vietnam, but the "Johnson clique" is ignoring manifestations of popular discontent and still trying to win military victories in order to talk from a position of strength. The article cites President Johnson's New Orleans speech as evidence that the US is continuing an "aggressive and war-like policy."

The article ridicules Vice President Humphrey for trying to show that he would be "as soft as a reed" on Vietnam. It also blasts the Vice President for his suggestion that the three major candidates issue a joint statement telling the Communists that the next administration will make no greater concessions than the present one. It ridicules the notion that the Communists would await the results of the elections before deciding "whether or not they should fight aggression."

An article broadcast to Southeast Asia on 14 September says the Democratic Party is following in the "old track of the Johnson Administration" and that the Vice President is a "carbon copy" of the President. It asks why the US has not drawn proper conclusions from the war and recognized the foreign and domestic harm done by the "Vietnam adventure." It concludes with a promise to fight on no matter who is elected.

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